The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

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CONTRIBUTIONS in aid of the publication and gratuitous circulation of the *Chronicle and Index* will be gladly received and acknowledged by the Rev. J. C. Street.

For the last time we remind all who are interested in the Royal Hospital Bazaar, which is to be held at the close of the present month, that contributions in goods or money, or both, will be thankfully received by Miss Coleman, Richmond, Antrim Road; Mrs. Parker, 33 Rugby Road; or Rev. J. C. Street, Ulsterville Avenue, Belfast.

The Sunday Evening Lectures in Rosemary Street Church, by the Rev. J. C. Street, began with the month of October. They have, as in former years, attracted large audiences. The subjects treated have been as follows:—

Oct. 5. The work which lies before us.
12. Searching for God.
19. The life which now is.
26. The life which is to come.

The local newspapers have given brief reports of some of these services. We append two. It is pleasant to notice at these services how the young men of the congregation render willing aid to the large number of strangers who attend the church.

At the evening service, October 5th, in the Church of the Second Congregation, Rosemary Street, the Rev. J. C. Street delivered the first of his Sunday evening lectures, entitled "The Work which Lies before Us." There was a large congregation present. The Rev. gentleman said that it was now some time since he had taken a full share of public duty. Since last he had had the pleasure of meeting them he had passed through many trying experiences. As they all knew, he had been partially at rest, and he had wandered not a little over the face of the earth, in order that he might renew his strength and be able to discharge the duties that a ministry like his required. He was glad to say that he had come back a good deal refreshed and invigorated, and thought he could resume his work with something of the energy and fire which a congregation like his required. The rev. gentleman then proceeded with his lecture, in the course of which he said that he could not speak to that audience as members of any particular congregation, denomination, or special organisation, for he knew those present belonged to various congregations and to different denominations, and that there was no particular organisation which included them all except that great organisation of humanity which, fortunately, was sufficiently catholic to include them all. Therefore, when he spoke to them of the work which lay before them he had to speak to men and women whose theological, political, social, and moral connections might in many respects differ from his own, but who nevertheless belonged to the common brotherhood of man, and had the same aspirations and desires, as well as a distinct and definite work to perform, the same objects to pursue, and the same grand results to attain. There was a great conflict going on in the community at the present time, not only in Belfast, but all over Christendom. The traditionalists who belonged to all the various Churches were finding that they were in a mighty convulsion which, to their horror, was shaking the ground under their feet. The traditions of the past were giving way; the old creeds and old doctrines

were but as the rags of the past generation, and people were asking themselves, with fear and trembling, what next should come. And while the traditionalists were standing in that attitude, there was a body of men which included philosophers and social inquirers who were standing boldly and resolutely in conflict with the traditionalists, fighting a great battle, and who were affirming that the Churches were passing away; that the creeds were disappearing, and that religion itself would no longer have a place in the conscience and heart of man. That was the conflict that was now going on, and there were men who said, "We have clung to the old faith, and it has given us comfort in many a time of trial and sorrow, but the old faith is slipping away from us." And the reply was "Don't concern yourselves about the old faith, but concern yourself simply about the truth, for the truth, whatever it is, is the thing you should be anxious to have, though it should banish Christianity and close the gates of heaven." He rejoiced at the conquests of science; he rejoiced at the careful studies of the philosophers; and he had much sympathy with those within the Churches who were clinging to the pillars while those pillars were shaking. It was very likely that much of the literature and many of the teachings of the philosophers and theologians would pass away, and that the doctrines once proclaimed as the very doctrines of God would one by one disappear, but out of the dissolution of these creeds would arise a faith, grander, fairer, and diviner than ever was made by human brains, which, while rooted in the very heart of man, would climb to the very heart of God.—*Morning News.*

On the 19th October, in the Church of the Second Congregation, Rosemary Street, the Rev. J. C. Street delivered a lecture, entitled "The life that now is." He said they were standing between two eternities—that of the past and that of the future. From the eternity of the past they received a message telling them in its own way of what had been; of ages passed away, of nations buried in silence, of life and death, vitality and decay; and, though the voice of the past was still and low, it was, nevertheless, eloquent, speaking of what indubitably had been. From the eternity of the future, as they faced its dark, ever-rolling ocean, no voice came. With the past he had nothing to do at present, and with the future he would deal on a future occasion, but his intention then was to deal with the life that now is—the point of space between the two eternities. In answer to the question, Is this life worth living? many told them that unless their present existence was but a preparation for a more glorious one to come, the earth was nothing but a howling wilderness and life a dreary, miserable journey, the burdens of which were intolerable. In spite of that declaration on the part of many theologians, he had noticed that those who spoke so contemptuously of this world's pleasures tried to live as comfortably as they could, and to extract all that was to be taken of comfort from this so called miserable existence. He could tell them that the life that is was not to be spoken of contemptuously, its pleasures more than compensating its pains. The secularist said there was no life to come. He (the speaker) asked even so? The atheist said there was no God, and again he said even so? In reply to all of them, he could say there was in this present life such wondrous delight and such marvellous revelations that whether there should be a life in the future or not, there was in this a divine possession, a magnificent heritage, which should fill us with thankfulness; but there was an eternal life, a life to come with overflowing benedictions, and he would deal with that next week; but the life that is was theirs, and was one which should fill their hearts with thankfulness and love to God.

We have on several occasions called the attention of our readers to the efforts which were being made to establish a congregation at Douglas, in the Isle of Man. Those efforts have been singularly successful. A band of earnest people has been gathered together, a fine church has been secured, and now we announce with great pleasure that our friend the Rev. Thomas Leyland has accepted a call to the ministry of the new congregation. We

may fairly congratulate the Douglas people that they have secured so excellent a minister as Mr. Leyland. They could not have found a more conscientious, painstaking, or successful man had they searched our ministry through. In securing him they have still had the good fortune which has attended all their efforts up to the present time. We feel confident now that another permanent church has been added to our denomination.

We are glad to note that the London Sunday School Association has published the very valuable address by Mr. William Hudson on "Systematic Teaching Practically Considered." The address is full of ripe experience and wisdom, and offers many suggestions which will prove of practical value to such teachers as desire to make their work in the Sunday School of permanent value. We wish the Association could afford to send a copy of the "Address" to every Sunday School teacher. In the meantime copies may be had at the Depository, at the price of twopence.

The Scottish Unitarian Association held its anniversary meetings in Glasgow on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, October 20th, 21st, and 22nd. The preacher was the Rev. H. E. Dowson of Manchester. The Revs. J. C. Street and T. Dunkerley, B.A., represented our Unitarian Society. The anniversary proved very successful. The record of work done by the Scottish Lecturer, and the happy settlement of Mr. Stronge over the newly formed congregations of Paisley and Kilbarchan, naturally secured a large amount of attention, and gave a hopeful turn to the proceedings. Every one seemed in cheerful spirits, and there was a tone of encouragement throughout the anniversary which will exercise an influence for good upon all who were present. For the first time in connection with these anniversaries there was a Sunday School Conference. It is intended that such Conferences shall be continued. The representatives from Belfast were most cordially received, and were heard with great attention and respect. We congratulate our Scottish friends upon the good work they are doing, and the encouragement they are giving to all who are working for the spread of liberal Christianity.

The congregation of Ballee has given a hearty and unanimous call to the Rev. J. H. Bibby, of Warrington, and we are glad to announce that Mr. Bibby has accepted the call and will immediately enter upon the duties of his ministry. The congregation and its minister have our best wishes for their happiness and prosperity.

The Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association has commenced its winter session in favourable circumstances. We give below an account of its opening meeting which was, in every respect, a gratifying success. The subsequent meetings have been well attended. The lecture by the Rev. J. C. Street on "The House of Peers, and what should be done with it," attracted a large audience, and was well reported in the Belfast newspapers. Mr. Aston read an admirable paper the following Monday evening entitled, "My Friend's Diary." Its reading was followed by a good deal of appreciative criticism. On Monday, October 27th, there was a pleasant programme of "music and readings" which was much enjoyed by the members and friends who were present. We confidently anticipate a successful session for this society.

The thirteenth session of the Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association was opened on Monday evening, October 6th, by a soiree and social meeting in the Lecture Hall of the Second Congregation. There was a large attendance of ladies and gentlemen. After tea, which was served in excellent style, Rev. J. C. Street, President of the Society, took the chair. Amongst those present on the platform were—Mr. Thomas M'Clelland, J.P.; Mr. James M. Darbishire, Mr. W. J. Roche, Mr. George Fisher, Mr. Robert M'Calmont, F.C.S.; Mr. T. E. Osborne, Mr. F. E. Dale, Dr. Henry Burden, Rev. Mr. Kelly, &c. A number of new members having been admitted,

The President said he was exceedingly gratified to be in his usual place at the commencement of another session. He thought there was no Mutual Improvement Society in Belfast that had had so long and so successful a career. They had had twelve sessions without any intermission, and the activity which had been shown in matters of literature and science had never flagged from the beginning of their proceedings until now. Last year they had 138 members in the Society, and in addition to these they had a number of ladies and gentlemen, formerly resident in Belfast, who took an active interest in the proceedings, and whose names were kept on the list as honorary members. Some of these had sent interesting and valuable literary contributions during the past session. This showed that the Society had a living interest not only for its active local members but for all those who, being once connected, had through one circumstance or another been obliged to leave Belfast. Last session the Society had subscribed nearly £50, all of which their committee had managed to expend. They commenced the last session with a balance of £24 in hands, and now began with a balance of £23 15s, so that they were in a healthy financial position. Their Society was as broad and comprehensive as any he knew in the world. It had no limitations. It included both sexes; it included men and women of all creeds and denominations; it included men and women who refused to be classed as belonging to any denomination, but all of them came together on the common platform of that literary and scientific Association on a perfect level and equality with a simple desire animating all their breasts to make the Society as useful, progressive, and successful as possible. During the twelve years of its history he did not remember that there had been one discordant note sounded in the midst of all their proceedings, though they had had many very animated discussions, especially on heated political questions. One result of this was that the members of the Society had learned to have a very great mutual respect for each other though there was amongst them great intellectual diversity. They were all seeking after truth. They did not bind themselves to hold by old traditions unless they found them to be true; if they found them wanting in truth they were prepared to discard them. The young people of the present had a royal avenue of literature open to them which was closed against the youth of the past generation, and societies such as this did good service in enabling them to take advantage of the facilities that were now within the reach of all. Referring to the programme for the present session he said that at the next meeting, he was set down to discuss the great problem of the present time, "The House of Peers—what should be done with it?" The question was a very pressing one. There would, no doubt, be many ladies and gentlemen present who would not agree with his method of solving the problem, and he trusted they would freely and emphatically express their opposition to his sentiments in the form of criticism. He trusted they would have a very profitable session, and that before it came to a close their numbers would be very considerably augmented, and if they all worked as hard as he intended to work, if spared in health, he did not doubt that their labours would be crowned with success. (Applause.)

A select programme of music aud readings was then gone through, Miss M. E. Holden and Miss Dobbin contributing pianoforte solos, Mr. M. Hughes (tenor) and Mr. Imrie (basso) vocal selections, and Mr. Adrain recitations and readings. It should be mentioned that the hall was specially decorated for the occasion. There was also exhibited a collection of paintings, pictures, and objects of art, which were inspected with evident interest. At the conclusion of the proceedings,

Mr. FISHER moved a vote of thanks to the ladies and gentlemen who had contributed to the enjoyment of the meeting in sustaining the programme that had been arranged.

Mr. Dale seconded the motion, which was passed.

Mr. M'Clelland, J.P., having been called to the second chair,

On the motion of Rev. Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Roche, a vote of thanks was accorded

to the President, after which the company separated.

On Sunday evening, October 5th, the induction service of the Rev. James Edmund Stronge, late of Belfast, who has entered upon the joint pastorate of the Unitarian churches at Paisley and Kilbarchan, was held in the Geo. A. Clark Minor Hall, Paisley. There was a good congregation, including a large deputation from the Kilbarchan church. The devotional part of the service was conducted by the Rev. Christopher J. Street, M.A., of Glasgow, the lecturer for the Scottish Unitarian Association, who commenced the services in the Clark Hall just a year ago, and the services at Kilbarchan in May last. Mr. Street delivered the charge to minister and people, drawing a picture of the ideal minister, and urging the congregation to support Mr. Stronge in his work. Mr. Robert Anderson tendered the welcome from the Paisley congregation, and Mr. John Patterson from the Kilbarchan congregation. The Rev. J. E. Stronge then delivered a thoughtful and valuable address which we regret our inability to report. It gave in precise terms a careful statement by the new minister of his religious principles and hopes, and must have produced a deep impression upon the minds of all who heard it. We cordially wish our friend God-speed.

On Saturday afternoon, October 11th, at three o'clock, a Sunday school Conference in connection with the Unitarian Society, Belfast, was held in the Unitarian Church, Rademon. There was a large attendance of ladies and gentlemen, including the Rev. J. C. Street, Belfast; Rev. T. Dunkerley, Comber; Rev. J. A. Kelly, Rademon; Rev J. H. Bibby, Manchester; Rev. W. Reynolds, Belfast; Rev. English Crooks, Ballyclare; Dr. Davidson; Messrs. J. M. Darbishire, William Davidson, J.P.; James Worthington, D. W. Moore, A. K. Stewart, J. Millin, Henry M'Robert, David Munn, Hamilton Jellie, James Milling, James Hutton, William Morrison, Andrew Mateer, Lowrie Martin, John Chambers, A. J. Kelly, Sydney H. Street, John Scott, Joseph Scott, John M'Roberts, &c.

Rev. Mr. Kelly opened the proceedings by conducting devotional exercises. The chair was then taken by Mr. J. M. Darbishire, Belfast, President of the Sunday School Society.

The Chairman said it was through the kindness of Mr. Kelly and their friends at Rademon that they were met that day. This was the second of their country conferences this season, and he was quite sure that, had it not been for the inclemency of the werther, there would have been a still larger attendance. Some time ago the Association in Belfast had instituted these very important conferences, and they had been largely attended not only at Rosemary Street, but at Mountpottinger. Their country friends, however, Mr. Dunkerley and Mr. Kelly, thought it was quite unfair that the people in Belfast should have all the good things to themselves, and so they were invited to Comber, where they had an interesting and profitable meeting. They were again asked to Comber this year, and had one of the most successful conferences that they had ever held. Mr. Kelly, desirous of emulating Mr. Dunkerley in the good work, invited the Committee to hold a conference at Rademon, and promised them a hearty welcome. It was a place where many of them had never been before, but was one which would be most favourably remembered by many of them after that day. He felt sure, from the faces he saw around him, that they would have in due course a very interesting discussion, and, without further remark, he would call on the Rev. Mr. Reynolds for his paper.

Rev. Mr. Reynolds read an essay entitled "Theology in our Sunday Schools," in which he urged the teaching of three great principles in Sunday Schools—liberty of the individual conscience, love, and the teachings of the Bible as viewed in the light of the advanced thought, the conservate thought, and the moderate thought of the day. He attributed the hold which other denominations obtain over their children to the drilling in their

catechisms which they receive in the Sunday Schools, and he suggested a simple Unitarian catechism which could be easily understood by young children.

Upon the conclusion of the paper the audience adjourned to Rademon National School, where tea was partaken of. After this the paper was discussed.

Rev. Mr. Kelly expressed himself pleased with the paper, and thought that if Unitarians would do their best to remedy their position in the religious world the body would be stronger than it is. He did not agree with those who said that they should not bias their children in any particular direction, and that they should allow them the fullest and freest scope to form their own opinions. If they were to make any progress as a denomination they must teach the young their own particular views, and show them wherein these views differ from those of others. Children should be taught a course of religious history, and be made to understand why Unitarians existed as a separate denomination. They were met as friends of religion, and although differences of opinion existed amongst them they would work together as parts of a great whole, trusting, honouring, and helping each other along life's rugged pathway. They did not want to bind men down to creeds or dogmas; they wanted to teach them the religion of Jesus Christ—love to God and love to man; they wanted to influence their young people so that when they would grow up to be men and women they might take their stand in the ranks of the Unitarian denomination as honourable, honest men in thought, word, and deed.

Rev. J. C. Street said he had listened to Mr. Reynold's paper not only with great interest, but with delight. The topics discussed were of deep interest, and had enlisted the attention of the free Christians or Unitarians for many years. Mr. Reynolds had submitted to them the proposal that they should in their Sunday Schools give some sort of theological training, so that the minds of young people might be opened at all events in the direction of the freer thought with which they were supposed to be identified. He was sure when the previous speaker said he would not leave children free to choose their religious opinions that he meant that they did not wish to leave children at the mercy of all the interests and associations round about them without giving them some means of forming a judgment for themselves, and arriving at a satisfactory conclusion. (Hear, hear.) In that Mr. Kelly had expressed in another form the idea of the essayist. One thing should be borne in mind by all of them—that liberty was the breath of their nostrils. Freedom of inquiry, freedom of conclusion, was an absolute necessity for their existence as a Church; and, whatever else they might believe or disbelieve, they must root themselves as a Church in that liberty, or they would cease to be. They wanted their children to be free, but also to protect them from the accretion of what they deemed to be errors that had accumulated during a whole series of generations. He did not mean that they should take the position of a sect. They should form their own opinions, judge and determine for themselves; but their doors should always be open for thought to come in in all directions, and their Churches should be as broad and as ample as the very universe in which we live. (Applause.) He was not prepared to go in for a catechism or the formulating of opinions for children lest he should be beginning a new sect. Science was a new factor that had entered into a conflict with authority, and they might be sure where science came in, which was only the interpretation of the law and working of God, it would upset the authority of men all the world over. (Applause.)

Rev. Thomas Dunkerley said there was something they ought to love more than the dogmas of any sect. There was the doctrine of

liberty given to them by their Almighty Father, and this they ought to cherish, it being the image of God in which they were made. Next, another principle came in—namely, their loyalty to truth. The man who found truth must proclaim it. It was the pearl of great price which Mr. Reynolds, the previous speaker, and he himself had to painfully struggle after. In gaining this, it was like coming into the open air to breathe the free breath of heaven, and he had had to lay aside dogma after dogma. He did not think children should be left without systematic religious teaching or without correct principles, else their mind would be a garden filled with weeds. It was incumbent upon them all to impart the truth which they possessed. Let them give to children the principles and the truths which they believed, and there would be no fear for the future.

Rev. J. H. Bibby thought there was too much of the butterfly in the teachers with whom he had had to do. They very often took up a pamphlet here, a tract there, a beautiful story in this paper, or something else in the other paper, and, thinking this good to tell to children on Sunday, they would do so. That was very nice, but the young people had to go out and meet the children of other denominations who were trained on theological lines. He thought there should be a greater unity of opinion in regard to the Bible, and that Unitarians should merely regard it as one of the many books which helped to form the world. This would uproot many an error.

Mr James Worthington having made a few observations,

Rev. Mr. Reynolds made a suitable reply to the criticisms which had been offered.

On the motion of the Rev. Mr. Kelly, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Reynolds, it was decided that the Committee of the Society should be asked to hold the next Conference in Mountpottinger.

Rev. J. C. Street moved that the warmest thanks of the strangers be given to the minister and members of Rademon congregation for the manner in which they had received the visitors that day.

Rev. Mr. Dunkerley seconded the motion, which passed amid applause.

Mr. W. Davidson, J.P., on behalf of the Rademon congregation, thanked the visitors for their attendance, and moved a vote of thanks to the President, which was heartily passed.

Rev. Mr. Kelly pronounced the benediction, and the proceedings terminated.

Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association.

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THIRTEENTH SESSION, 1884-85.

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The Committee have much pleasure in announcing the following

PROGRAMME UNTIL CHRISTMAS 1884.

1884.

Nov. 8—"An Unholy Alliance." Mr. F. D. F. O'Connor.

„ 10—Paper, "Treason." Mr. J. Cuming.

„ 17—Discussion, "Is Assisted Emigration desirable in the interests of the People of Ireland?" Opened by Mr. Vere Foster.

„ 24—Paper, "A Few Wayside Ideas concerning Life." Mr. J. Worthington.

Dec. 1.—Music and Readings.

„ 8.—Miscellaneous (Original) Compositions. Members and Friends.

„ 15—Lecture, "Music." Rev. J. A. Kelly.

„ 22—Paper, "Political Reform." Mr. J. Johnston.

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THE OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

ARE

The intellectual and moral advancement of its members, and the furtherance of fellowship and acquaintance among them.

The Meetings are held on Monday Evenings at Eight o'clock, in the Rosemary Street Schools.

Admission—To Lectures and Discussion. Members Free; Non-Members, Sixpence each. To Papers, and Music, and Readings—Free.

Member's Subscription.—4s. per annum, which entitles to the use of the Library. Subscriptions for the Thirteenth Session are now due and should be paid to the Treasurer, Thos. Edens Osborne, at 14, Lombard Street, *as early as possible.*

The Librarian will be in attendance after service on Sunday Mornings, and on every Monday Evening during the Session.

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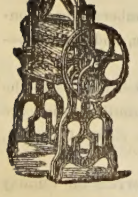

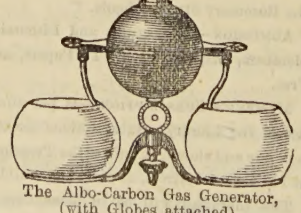

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Any Book or Pamphlet may be obtained at the Depository, on application to the Agent.

We invite our friends to call and inspect the new Tracts and Books which are offered for sale at the Depository.

Contributions in aid of the *Chronicle and Index* will be gladly received and acknowledged by the Rev. J. C. STREET.

APPEAL FOR DOUGLAS CHURCH.

Sum required, £1,125, towards which subscriptions will be thankfully received by—

Mr. JOHN BARRON,
26, Duke Street, Douglas, Isle-of-Man.
Rev. J. C. STREET,
Ulsterville Avenue, Belfast.

Amount already received, ... £503 14 0

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